

MOVIES

# RORSCHACH TEST

Holy adaptation, fanboy!

BY DAVE MAASS  
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Reading Alan Moore's *Watchmen* forces the brain to change: The mind suddenly sees the depth of character and conflict that lies just between the ink dots in a superhero story. The merely comic-curious mutate into fanboys.

I'm a victim, myself, and therefore cannot relate to the filmgoer who hasn't read the book. Here's the synopsis for neophytes: It's 1985. Richard Nixon is somehow still president and the US and Russia are on the brink of nuclear war over control of Afghanistan. Costumed heroes could save the planet, except they've been banned.

The film is the ultimate deconstruction of the superhero genre and it's violent, sexy, stylish and probably completely incoherent. Go read the book before you finish this review.



Once you go blue, you'll feel brand-new.

For my fellow Watchfans:

Verdict: It's about as good an adaptation of *Watchmen* as anyone could make, ever, but it didn't earn instant entry into the *Wee Book of Great Films* by Dave Maass, not like [Moore's] *V for Vendetta*. Then again, *V* didn't have swaying Smurf cock. (Yes, Dr. Manhattan's electric indigo pecker is one of the keynote elements to check off as I grade Snyder's final product.) Here are the others (SPOILER ALERT!).

**Rorschach:** Rorschach is 100 percent the crusty, stinky, homeless, short, ugly, redheaded psychopath with a heart of gold that came to life (and death) on the page. Plus, the inkblots on his mask constantly shift throughout the picture. Jackie Earle Haley nails the misguided hero's trembling fury, completely outshining Matthew Goode's David-Spade-as-ninja treatment of Ozymandias. A-

**Booty:** Guess what? Heroes prematurely ejaculate, too. And just because a superhero can multiply himself doesn't mean his girlfriend is ready for an orgy with the Blue Man Group. Props for including Dr. Manhattan's full frontal, complete with pendulous organ swaying back and forth like only a master of space, time and particle manipulation can manifest. Also, props for pulling no kicks to the face in the first hero-on-hero rape scene in history. B+

**Sand Castle:** The most memorable sequence in the graphic novel, for me, is Manhattan's temper tantrum on Mars, where Moore and artist David Gibbons jump back and forth in chronology to illustrate a God-like being's perception of time. The film sticks with the Journey album cover *mise-en-scène*: Manhattan's blue bubble-butt exposed as he sits cross-legged and builds a glass castle with his mind. A-

**Moore:** While efforts to keep to Moore's grand plan are more or less successful, the film has a certain emptiness. Moore's words, concepts and characters are there, but the spirit of the man is not. Message to Moore: Stop being a little bitch about what was done to *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and get involved with the DVD cut. D-

**WATCHMEN**  
 Directed by Zack Snyder  
 Written by David Hayter and Alex Tse, based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore and David Gibbons  
 With Billy Crudup, Jackie Earle Haley, Patrick Wilson and Malin Akerman  
 Dreamcatcher, Regal Stadium  
 14  
 163 min.  
 R

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